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WASHINGTON

LIBYA - TURNER

Former CIA Director Stansfield Turner warned today that Libya's leader Moammar Khadafy, like Cuba's Fidel Castro, is going to be a continuing thorn in the side of the United States.

"There is no way that I can see to unseat Khadafy," Turner said in an interview on NBC's "Today" program. "He is a problem. He is a thorn in our side just like Castro in Cuba."

"We've got to continue keeping the world (informed) that he is a troublemaker. He's got a lot of money, not a lot of military power, and that he can cause trouble for us."

Turner, who was President Carter's CIA chief, said he felt the United States' show of force by moving AWACS surveillance planes to Egypt and the nuclear carrier Nimitz close to Libyan waters had helped the government of President Jaafar Numeiry in the Sudan stand up to any Libyan intrigue.

"I believe the (U.S.) government has played it quite well," Turner said. But, Turner said, "It's time to ease off right now."

"I think it is important today though that we continue to back off quickly and quietly because you don't want a head-on confrontation here that is going to keep the fleet tied down, the AWACS tied down there and appear to pit us too strongly against what it an Arab state, Libya."

Turner said of the lack of Soviet influence in the latest Mideast problems, "I think it continues to show that the Soviets just don't have the wherewithal to be a very important player in this part of the world."

Asked about the presence of former CIA Deputy Director Vernon Walters in the Sudan, Turner said Walters, a current State Department trouble-shooter, probably is looking for ways to support Numeiry.

"I think he is part of this show of support, part of a general counseling of Numeiry," Turner said. "He is probably feeling the waters to find out what the internal problems are. You know, the Sudan is a divided country. The North half is Moslem. The Southern half is Christian, so Walters is trying to find out just how much trouble Numeiry has at home to see if he can provide him some internal support in addition."